

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

OMB-01 PC-01 /063 W

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R 091543Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5864

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4007

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EC

SUBJ: UPDATE ON POLITICAL FERMENT IN ECUADOR

REF: A. QUITO 2123; B. QUITO 2719; C. QUITO 2743

D. QUITO 2774; E. QUITO 3123

1. SUMMARY: RECENT SIGNS OF SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FERMENT HAVE DIED DOWN A BIT, FOLLOWING THE NORMAL RATHER RAUCOUS BAHAVIOR AROUND THE FEBRUARY 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RODRIGUEZ LARA REGIME, AND THE DUST-UP THAT FOLLOWED SEVERAL POLITICAL ARRESTS AND THE HARASSMENT OF A FEW OF THE MORE OUTSPOKEN CRITICS OF THE GOE. AS ECUADOR FACES THE FIRST SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS IT HAS ENCOUNTERED SINCE THE OIL STARTED TO FLOW IN 1972, THERE HAS THUS FAR BEEN NO COALESCING OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION WHICH MIGHT THREATEN THE STABILITY OF THE REGIME. END SUMMARY.

2. JULIO PRADO, EX-FOREIGN MINISTER, PROMINENT COLUMNIST AND CRITIC OF THE REGIME, IS STILL IN HIDING, ALTHOUGH HE MAY NOW BE BACK IN ECUADOR (HE HAD EARLIER BEEN RUMORED ACROSS THE BORDER IN COLOMBIA). THE SIX-WEEK OLD WARRANT FOR HIS ARREST (QUITO 2743) IS STILL OUTSTANDING, AND  
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NEWLY-PPPOINTED MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT BRIG GEN DURAN

HAS REAFFIRMED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO PROSECUTE PRADO FOR DEFAMATION (INSULTS TO THE PRESIDENT, LIBELOUS REMARKS, UNTRUTHS, ETC). PRADO'S COLUMNS CONTINUE TO APPEAR IN THE QUITO DAILY, EL TIEMPO, BUT WITH LESS FREQUENCY, AND ARE NOTICEABLY LESS SCATHING TOWARD THE GOE.

3. DIRECTOR OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY DR. JULIO CESAR TRUJILLO, ARRESTED FIVE WEEKS AGO FOR HAVING ORGANIZED A POLITICAL RALLY IN DEFIANCE OF A GOVERNMENT BAN ON SUCH MEETINGS (QUITO 3123), IS STILL SOMEWHERE IN THE ORIENTE, PRESUMABLY UNDER WATCHFUL EYES AT SOME ARMY OUTPOST. TRUJILLO'S ARREST ATTRACTED THE CONDEMNATION OF PRACTICALLY EVERY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL GROUPING (EXCEPT THE COMMUNISTS), INCLUDING EDITORIALS IN ALL MAJOR NEWSPAPERS CRITICISING THE GOE FOR ITS INTOLERANCE OF CRITICISM.

4. TWO LESSER POLITICAL FIGURES (DR. GERMAN ALARCON AND ENRIQUE GALLEGOS) WHO WERE PICKED UP ON APRIL 24TH (QUITO 3123) HAVE BEEN VIRUTALLY FORGOTTEN BY THE LOCAL PRESS. THERE WAS SOME INITIAL SENTIMENT THAT CHARGES AGAINST THEM MIGHT HAVE HAD SLIGHTLY MORE JUSTICE THAN THOSE AGAINST PRADO OR TRUJILLO; THEY WERE ACCUSED OF BEING BEHIND THE LISTS OF JOURNALISTS IN THE PAY OF THE GOE WHICH WERE CIRCULATED IN FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL (QUITO 2123), AND WHICH HAVE NOW BEEN MORE OR LESS THOROUGHLY DISCREDITED. MANY PEOPLE ACCEPT THAT THE GOE HAS PROBABLY SUBORNED CERTAIN JOURNALISTS, BUT THERE ARE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS LISTS THAT THEY NOW MERELY MAKE INTERESTING READING, BUT HARDLY CONCLUSIVE PROOF.

5. EVEN ALL THE HUBBUB OVER THE COMMUNIST PARTY DOCUMENT (QUITO 2774) CALLING FOR "REVOLUTION NOW" HAS LARGELY SUBSIDED, AND ITS AUTHENTICITY IS WIDELY CHALLENGED.

6. ALTHOUGH AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN IN RECENT MONTHS, THERE CONTINUES TO BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CRITICISM OF THE GOE. TWO OF THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT PARTIES ON THE LIBERAL SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM (THE LIBERAL RADICALS AND THE LIBERAL RADICAL ALFARISTS) JOINED YESTERDAY (JUNE 5TH) ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF ECUADOR'S

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LIBERAL REVOLUTION IN ATTACKING THE GOE FOR ITS ABUSE OF POWER AND LACK OF PROGRESS IN RESOLVING THE ECONOMIC ILLS OF THE COUNTRY. BUT BOTH PRIMARILY DRAW STRENGTH FROM THE MORE LIBERAL (AND POLITICALLY-ACTIVE) COASTAL PROVINCES, INCLUDING GUAYAQUIL, AND CALLS TO WORSHIP ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1895 REVOLUTION ARE TRADITIONAL AND QUICKLY FORGOTTEN. THIS TIME, THE TWO PARTIES ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE ESTABLISHING A "COMMITTEE FOR THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL

GOVERNMENT, AND CALLED ON THE RODRIGUEZ LARA GOVERNMENT TO APPOINT A CIVILIAN CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD ADMINISTER THE COUNTRY PENDING A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY AND FREE ELECTIONS. A CALL UNLIKELY TO BE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY BY THE GOE. PROBABLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING ABOUT YESTERDAY'S SPEECHMAKING BY THE LIBERALS WAS THE EXPOSURE IT GAVE FRANCISCO HUERTA (LIBERAL RADICAL LEADER) AND ABDON CALDERON (LEADER OF THE SPLINTER ALFARIST MOVEMENT); HUERTA, AT LEAST, WOULD HAVE TO BE COUNTED A SIGNIFICANT PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITY SHOULD ELECTIONS EVER BE HELD.

8. FROM AN INTERNAL STANDPOINT, THE IMPORTANT THING IS DESPITE A HANDFUL OF POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED ARRESTS, THE POLITICAL PARTIES STILL HOLD THEIR GATHERINGS, THE NEWSPAPERS STILL CRITICISE, AND ALTHOUGH THE GOE HAS PROVEN SENSITIVE TO THIS CRITICISM, THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO WIDESPREAD CRACKDOWN OR ANY EVIDENT MIS-TREATMENT OF THOSE PEOPLE IT HAS PICKED UP. MEANWHILE, LITTLE IN THE POLITICAL EQUATION WHICH MIGHT WEAKEN THE GOE'S GRIP OVER THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED, AND THE SHORT-TERM ABILITY OF THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO EXPLOIT THE GOE'S DIFFICULTIES REMAINS IN DOUBT. ALTHOUGH THE INGREDIENTS FOR SERIOUS POLITICAL PROTEST REMAIN, THERE HAS THUS FAR BEEN NO COALESCING OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION WHICH MIGHT THREATEN THE STABILITY OF THE REGIME, LET ALONE ITS ABILITY TO REMAIN IN POWER.  
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## Message Attributes

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